REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-24 and 26 are presently active in this application; Claims 2, 25 and 27 canceled and Claims 1, 3-24 and 26 amended by the present amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action Claims 10-14 were rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite; Claims 1, 3, 8 and 23-24 were rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by Coffin et al (USPN 5,991,429); Claims 2 and 25 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Krawchuk et al (USPN 5,418,942); Claims 4-5, 7, 16 and 26-27 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Price-Francis (USPN 5,815,252); Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Kado et al (USPN 5,995,639); Claims 9 and 15 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Slocum et al (USPN 6,430,306); Claims 17-19 and 20-21 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Setlak et al (USPN 5,841,888); and Claim 22 was rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Setlak et al and further in view of Price-Francis.

In response to the rejection of Claims 10-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, these claims have been amended to clarify the claimed subject matter and the amended claims are believed to be definite under the statute. No new matter has been added. If the Examiner still considers that further clarification is necessary, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, who will be happy to work with the Examiner in a joint effort to derive mutually satisfactory claim language.

In response to the several grounds for rejection on the merits, the independent claims have been amended to include features stated in the original dependent claims and to clarify the subject matter being claimed. No new matter has been added. Claims 2, 25 and 27 have accordingly been canceled.

Turning now to the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 8, 23-24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Coffin et al., Coffin et al disclose correlation techniques that compare previously processed image information with a presently scanned image to confirm or generate the identity of an individual.

Claim 1 recites a personal identification apparatus including a registered information operation device configured to sort, in an order, specific information pieces of registered persons in a storage device, in accordance with an elapse time from a last identification of the object person or a frequency of identification thereof.[1] Coffin et al do not teach the claimed feature, that is, sorting specific information pieces in accordance with an elapse time from a last identification of the object person or a frequency of identification thereof.

In response to the rejection of Claims 2 and 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Krawchuk et al, it is noted that Krawchuk et al disclose "an information storage system which is connectable to an input interface means and an output interface means, the information storage system comprising a computer, the computer having a memory, the memory of the computer having a plurality of nodes stored therein, each node having a unique identifier within the memory, the memory of the computer including means defining pointers between pairs of said nodes, the pointers comprising only identifiers of other nodes, the pointers having been assigned by the input interface means in response to transmission of input data to the input interface means by a user, wherein each node contains no application data elements other than pointers, wherein information to be stored is stored only as a pattern of said pointers, and wherein said stored pattern is convertible by the output interface means into data recognizable by the user."[2] Within the general purpose approach outlined in Krawchuk et al, it is noted, as relied upon in the outstanding Office Action, "[a]nother fruitful method of improving execution efficiency of

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[1] (See, for example, original claim 2, and page 13, line 1, page 14, lines 11-18, and page 24, lines 10-26 of the specification.
[2] Krawchuk , Claim 1.

procedures is to arrange Ennumerants according to the frequency of their usage."[3] In is respectfully submitted that Krawchuk et al teach only an enumeration process in a general data processing application, but do not teach the claimed feature, that is, sorting specific information pieces of the registered persons, in accordance with an elapsed time from a last identification of an object person or frequency of identification of an object person. Accordingly, the amended independent Claims which include such a feature are believed to be patentably distinguishing over Coffin et al or Krawchuk et al whether considered alone or in combination.

In response to the rejection of Claims 4-5, 7, 17 and 26-27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Price-Francis, it is noted that Price-Francis disclose a process of verifying the identity of an individual card owner, which involves the successive and sequential comparisons of one or more single characteristics, e.g., fingerprints, randomly selected if more than one is required to verify an identity. According to Price-Francis, data representing the characteristic features of a plurality of fingerprints are coded and stored on a card. The Price-Francis system can request alternative fingerprint information if one of more of the fingers are not available for scanning. In other words, if one of the fingerprints is not available, another one is used. In contrast, the claimed invention of Claim 4 extracts another specific information piece of the person present at a lower-order position than the specific information piece extracted from the object person.[4] In other words, the claimed invention extracts a specific information piece in a hierarchy. It is respectfully submitted that no such hierarchal selection is disclosed by Price-Francis, and that the rejection relying on this reference is also traversed.

In response to the rejection of Claims 9 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Slocum et al., it is noted that Slocum et al disclose an embodiment wherein a recognition program element includes a text query element for

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[3] Id. , column 66, lines 49-51.
[4] Specification, page 19, line 22 to page 20, line 7, for example.

comparing text information with the identification signals stored in the data recodes. The text query element compares, sorts and orders data records as a function of text signals. However, Slocum et al. do not teach sorting, in an order, specific information pieces of registered persons in a storage device, in accordance with an elapse time from a last identification of the object person or a frequency of identification thereof. This ground for rejection is therefore likewise traversed

In response to the rejection of Claims 17-19, and 20-21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Coffin et al in view of Setlak et al., it is noted that Setlak et al. disclose that the curliness index when computed for each fingerprint of the database can be used to sort the fingerprints into a monotonically increasing sequence, and selecting a first subset of the reference fingerprints having index values within a first range relative to the index value of the sample finger print. However, Setlak et al. do not teach sorting, in an order, specific information pieces of registered persons in a storage device, in accordance with an elapse time from a last identification of the object person or a frequency of identification thereof. This ground for rejection is therefore likewise traversed.

Furthermore, none of the cited references teach particularly to retry identification of an object person based on another specific information piece which presents at a lower-order position when identification fails.

Accordingly, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above comments, it is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention patentably defines over the cited references and are in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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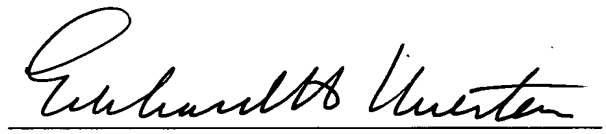

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